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LIBERAL EDUCATION WITHOUT LATIN¹

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Let us, with something of the resolution with which we are now meeting the stern realities of war, also recognize that as a people we are deficient in the standards and attainments of liberal education as these are required to live up to the position and responsibilities which are sure to be ours in the twentieth century, as a result of this war; that ours is a conspicuously superficial culture; and that our ideals and our insight, where the genuine humanities of our day are involved, are in many essential respects lacking in depth and sincerity, and especially in the qualities of reality. As certainly as we watched from a distance the present storm mount and finally sweep us into its depths while we trembled in apprehension and irresolution, so certainly shall we again and again find ourselves in the near future unready to meet the new world problems that are inevitably to confront us. We are seriously unprepared for our coming part in diplomacy, interchange of knowledge, and the promotion of constructive programs making for international co-operation and friendliness.

How many among us can use a foreign language with precision and effect? To whom shall we look when we seek spokesmen to the Japanese, the Russians, the Chinese and the Brazilians? How few and how meagrely read are the books and journals that speak to our people of the profounder stir-

¹ Substance of presentation made by affirmative in a debate in Philadelphia on April, 25, 1918, before the American Society for University Extension Teaching, between Dean Andrew F. West of the Graduate School of Princeton University (negative) and Professor David Snedden of Teachers College, Columbia University (affirmative) on the question: **RESOLVED:** *That Latin should not be required, either for entrance or in college, for any Bachelor's degree in liberal studies.*

rings of government, social policy and economic enterprise in those lands whose destinies are sure yet to be interwoven with our own! How little in any genuine sense do we yet appreciate the extent and character of the transformations even now steadily and rapidly taking place in the very soil from which spring those plants that we call art, literature, culture, religion, and democracy, because of contemporary diffusion and deepening of scientific spirit and method!

And yet in some respects we are the most extensively taught people in the world. In the public and private high schools of the United States are found today many hundreds of thousands of our most gifted and most ambitious boys and girls between fourteen and eighteen years of age. Our numerous colleges, founded close upon the heels of settlement in all our states, and especially colleges making no pretensions as to offerings of special vocational training, have long been crowded with young men and women, the finest products of our blended and prosperous people. America has not stinted in providing for aspiring youth the means of culture as that has been understood. In no other country has so large a proportion of young men and women been given the opportunities and incentives for all those studies which supposedly make for informing the mind and enriching the spirit—in other words, for humanism. Certainly, we can hardly rebuke ourselves for indifference, for deficiency of high intent, or for niggardliness of support in matters of what we believed to be liberal education. And it is just as certain, notwithstanding frequent allegations to the contrary, that the large majority of the hundreds of thousands of youth constantly seeking our higher schools and colleges, are not in quest, only, or even chiefly, of the education which they can turn to immediate practical advantage—in the narrowly utilitarian sense.

Nevertheless, in spite of good intentions and an abundant provision of material means, our agencies of liberal education

have, I believe, conspicuously failed to meet the needs of our nation in this age. They have left us in a state of intellectual and spiritual unpreparedness. Why? Largely, I contend, because those to whom we have entrusted the direction of our institutions of higher learning have had no adequate understanding of the meaning and character of liberal education as that must be developed for the needs of a dynamic civilization expanding and deepening into the twentieth century, a civilization carrying along growing aspirations for democracy, for harmony among peoples, and for profounder understanding of the essential things of the present and the future. At a time when all the vital elements of political, religious, economic and cultural life were being reshaped by forces of incomprehensible magnitude and complexity, many of our strongest educational leaders have continued to prostrate themselves before decaying shrines of the past. With good intentions, but bad performance, they have, in the name of an unsound psychology and a false pedagogy, constituted themselves the voluntary defenders of a static social order. With eyes aloof and minds closed to the realities of present and future, they have ever tried to hold the thoughts and aspirations of their disciples to the departed glories of a Greece or a Rome, to the culture of a thirteenth or sixteenth century, on the assumption that these, and these chiefly, exemplify the high and noble things of spirit and mind which should be the foundation of all fine learning suited to a modern world.

For generations, and almost unto yesterday, they caused the dead hands of Latin, Greek and mathematics to hold in leash and often to paralyze the aspirations of our youth to share in the appreciation, and perhaps to aid in the creation, of cultural products significant of our New World character and opportunities. Millions of American boys and girls, the best of our stock and of our democratic social life, have come gladly up to our schools, naively seeking the bread that would nurture

them in the idealism and achievement of modern America; and to them has been given—what? Shreds and scraps of two complex ancient languages that were never to become really intelligible to most of them, and could not, in the very nature of the case, become more than slightly intelligible, except to a very few, and which were destined to be, in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, almost completely forgotten within ten years of the closing of school life. Accompanying the prescribed and often meaningless studies of the grammar and composition of these languages, were also studies, hardly less pitiful, of classical texts, to the elucidation of which the less scrupulous students have helped themselves by the ever-ready interlinear. Hundreds of thousands of our youth have toiled reluctantly line by line through the *Anabasis* and millions have painfully translated Caesar's *Commentaries*—splendid bits of composition in themselves, but about as significant to the realities of a nineteenth or twentieth century as bows and arrows would be in modern warfare, or Roman galleys in the naval contests of tomorrow. Our educational conservatives have been industriously trying to gather figs of liberal education from the thistles of the classics. They have turned their eyes so constantly backward that they have themselves eventually become incapable of seeing clearly the realities of present and future. They have never learned that the twentieth century was eventually due in education as it was obviously arriving in science, economic achievement, social economy, medicine, engineering, and agriculture.

It was inevitable, of course, that as America found itself politically, economically, and socially, it should try to free itself of the obviously useless trammels of the past. Classical studies in schools and colleges have therefore become more and more vestigial. Boys and girls by hundreds of thousands, and usually those of superior ability and home environment, still elect the skeletonized Latin offered in public high schools,

because of the possibility that they may want to attend those strong, endowed institutions whose social connections, wealth and historic strength enable them long to resist the modernizing influences to which institutions more closely in touch with the spirit of the age and more responsive to the will of democracy have in part yielded. Almost universally in our private schools, and still quite generally in our public schools, American youth study and recite in perfunctory spirit the meaningless rituals of Latin Grammar and Roman classic. But there rarely results any genuine interest in either the ancient language or its so-called literature. The wholesome common-sense characteristic of Americans soon asserts itself. Half contemptuous, half tolerant, and wholly uninterested, and an easy victim to the dishonesty of the "pony," the boy passes his antiquated tests for admission to the college whose social opportunities mean so much to him. He promptly relegates to the lumber-room of his mind the broken antiques with which misguided teachers have tried to equip him. The colleges (a steadily diminishing number, however), having exacted the ancient ceremonial observance, now usually permit the youth to proceed in freer ways towards his degree.

But if the study of Latin has degenerated to the vestigial position here indicated, why the strong opposition manifested against it on the part of those who call themselves liberals in secondary and college education? The exactions of time and energy imposed by the stated amounts of Latin now required by even our more conservative institutions do not seem excessive. A minimum of from one to two thousand hours of study and recitation given out of the lifetime of an individual to an enterprise of learning with such honorable antecedents (in former centuries) as the study of Latin surely seems no great sacrifice. The college admission requirement against which we inveigh rarely demands more than one-fourth of the learner's time through a four-year secondary school course.

It ought to be obvious that, in the main, the motives of those who seek to remove Latin from the list of the specific prescriptions required for any high school course, or for candidacy for any liberal arts degree are not founded on mere prejudice or utilitarianism. It is, of course, an easily made charge that the so-called opponents of Latin—who are in reality only opponents of the monopolistic position accorded at present to Latin—are interested only in bread-and-butter education, that they are lacking in devotion to the ideals of culture, that they are infected with the anarchistic spirit of the age which would cut loose from the moorings of established institutions and inherited traditions.

It is not part of my present purpose to reply to these criticisms. However well founded they may be in the case of a few opponents of Latin, they do not apply to the many students of education whose attitudes have been formed only as a result of extensive comparative study of the possible and desirable objectives of all advanced instruction and training.

Those of us who disapprove the present protected position of Latin as a secondary school study, a position made possible only by the requirements imposed by powerful institutions of higher learning, do so for the very fundamental reasons, that, in the first place, the insistently repeated allegations as to the educational values of Latin as now taught, are in fact, without demonstrated validity, and, that, in the second place, Latin, as an artificially protected study, stands as one pronounced barrier to the development of truly effective liberal education suited to the genius of the American people and to the needs of a twentieth century democracy. We contend that to give any study in a system of liberal education a sacrosanct and artificially protected place on half mystical and wholly traditional grounds, is to corrupt the sources, and to invalidate the methods, of all true liberal education from the outset. The values pretended to be found in the study of Latin impress the

scientific person who thinks in terms of present and future results as being like the meaningless mummeries and symbols of religious rituals that have long outlived the period of their vitality. These alleged values rest actually in part on old customs of little present worth, in part on mere stubborn devotion to the ancient for its own sake, and in part on the rewards always to be won by clever exploiters of the credulity of those whose faiths are easily enlisted in the ultra-modern or ultra-antique.

What curious defenses are still conjured up in defense of the classical studies and especially on behalf of that clinging "dead hand" study, Latin! All educators of any breadth of view appreciate the unequalled importance of the "humanities," those studies designed to lead the minds and spirits of our growing youth to apprehend the things that have fine and big messages of human possibilities and achievement. In a broad and real sense the "humanities" are always to be cherished as vital studies in any plan of liberal education. But are we to delude ourselves into thinking that the slow and perfunctory dissection of a few classical works of literature, produced by great minds that lived in regions and times the thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of which are almost inconceivably far removed from ours, could serve, except in one possible instance in a thousand, to produce the kinds of insight and appreciation that are properly to be begotten of those studies which we may sincerely call the humanities?

Again, we are solemnly assured that through the study of these ancient languages and the few easily available examples of their literatures, there is produced a kind of magic mental discipline, a unique kind of sharpening of the mental faculties, not to be found in studies of other languages or literatures, nor in other subjects based on the realities of our own day and generation. As if the living gymnastics of mind were not best to be secured through those activities of mental and spiritual

apprehension and action which come from strong efforts to possess and to control the realities of habit, knowledge, and ideal that have worth for today and for tomorrow!

We are told, too, in words of well simulated profundity, that contemporary civilization has its roots in the old civilizations which flourished in the Italian and Grecian peninsulas, and that it is through study of the surviving desiccated examples of those cultures that our youth are best able to gain access to the more complex cultures of our own times. As if any sound system of pedagogy should or could have the unformed mind make its first essays in fields that are so remote in time and place as still to be largely unintelligible!

We are also assured that some knowledge of Latin is essential to the mastery of English or of a modern foreign language. But here again, we are given no evidence that makes allowance for the great selective forces operating in schools as heretofore conducted. Many a self-educated Lincoln or Walt Whitman has given us fine virile English; and certainly thousands who have made good records in Latin and Greek have later given us English that is but as hollow brass and tinkling cymbal. We know too little yet of the psychology of good language training to speak with confidence of these matters. If, as a partial result of the numberless hours given by our youth to the study of the classics since colonial days, we could point to prevalent forceful and fine vernacular usage as one accomplishment, and to some real mastery of modern foreign tongues as another, there would at least be ground for shifting the burden of proof to the opponents of the monopolies long accorded to Latin and Greek and still held by Latin. But, in reality, we exhibit among our college-educated classes no such achievements that are not equally to be attributed to the superior home environments and to the opportunities and exactions of the social positions of these more favored groups. Any critical analysis, even in the light of our present uncertain educational

science, of the valuable objectives and useful methods of language training, either in the vernacular or in a foreign tongue, must always strengthen the convictions of common sense that direct investment of available time and energy in the positive and specific pursuit of the actual ends we desire is the best investment we can make.

Finally, we are told that students who elect Latin in our schools reveal themselves later as having better minds than those who do not take Latin, and that as men and women they succeed better along almost all lines. But to those who realize the forces of selection always operative among parents and even among children themselves, the inferences usually drawn from these facts represent the baldest kind of reasoning "*post hoc ergo propter hoc*." There is much evidence indeed that heretofore, and even yet, pupils electing courses containing Latin are natively superior to those who do not make such elections. Parents aspiring after the best for their children do not set themselves up as experts in determining values of studies. Naturally, they accept the judgments of the higher institutions, and, in matters in which confessedly they have little knowledge, they prefer to abide by respected custom and tradition. But there exists as yet no available evidence to show that, even in mental powers, as judged by ordinary standards, the superior students found in Latin owe their superiority to their Latin studies.

It is not here contended, of course, that other secondary school studies, as now administered, give results superior to Latin. Practically, viewed from the standpoint of the needs of our age, our entire program of secondary education has been stricken with the blight of blind traditionalism and formalism. Mathematics, the one other subject apart from English that enjoys a monopolistic position like that held by Latin, supplies to most of the girls and to many of the boys obliged to study it, probably nothing more substantial than intellectual husks.

French and German, as now taught, are, when judged by the standards of interest and mastery that should characterize a truly liberal education, largely cultural shams. High school sciences, long ago placed under the bondage of a pedagogy derived from a now obsolete theory of mental faculties, have become bankrupt as means of giving genuine appreciation and insight to the mind that must interpret well or ill the scientific social inheritance of the 19th century. Even history and English literature, largely because of faulty aims and method have so far failed to yield to our millions of youth the riches of humanistic vision and sentiment which ought certainly to be derived from these studies when pursued under right conditions.

What we now need is someone to speak to us with the voice of a trumpet the message which seems long ago to have been heard by young Athenians—that has everywhere been heard by generous youth destined to add to the spiritual possessions of their age—namely that as a strong people, our best opportunities to develop new strength, to do creative work, are here and now. We must learn to build for today and the future, and to turn to the past only when, in any given case, we shall have planted our feet firmly on the rock of the living present and the nascent tomorrow. Let us as a nation take due pride in the achievements of our forefathers and ourselves, and at the same time earnestly resolve yet farther to enrich humanity by our efforts.

America's contributions already made to the social inheritance of the modern world are neither meagre nor unimportant. Our democratic ideals of government and social life, our scientific mastery of economic forces, our steadily forming conceptions of community well-being—these constitute social assets fundamental to all other forms of social evolution and in all of these we have played our part as explorers, inventors and master builders.

It is now our opportunity and our obligation so to organize existing educational and other agencies of culture that here too the American people may be strong and creative. The feet of many of our gifted young men and women, given right incentive, can be turned into the paths of humanistic leadership just as certainly as were those of creative men and women in the virile and forward looking epochs of the past.

But to achieve these results we must develop in the fields of liberal education the conditions which have made the American people originators in the spheres of politics, mechanical invention, and business organization. We must cease to make ourselves dependent on the past, except as we perceive its possible service to present and future. We must encourage our youth during their plastic years to look about them and forward in the world of vital realities for objectives, and to look within themselves for incentives to action. They must learn to adapt with caution, and not at all flatly to imitate the work of those who lived under conditions very unlike those which prevail today. They must learn that we live in an age as unlike those of Athens or Rome or 15th century Florence, as are the topography and climate of the Mediterranean shores unlike the great geographic reaches and tremendous meteorological alternations of our own continent.

The great war more than ever impresses upon us as a people that if we are to fulfill our destiny, we must cultivate originality. We must in every possible way seek out the inventive spirit among us and give to that endless varieties of encouragement and positive incentive. We must cease to be worshippers of *temporis acti*. Our Golden Age lies in the future and in prospecting our way towards it, we can, when we are sufficiently mature, and in exceptional instances, borrow even from the records of the journeyings of Xenophon or the quests of Ulysses. But we must borrow with restraint and discretion; otherwise, our aspiring youth will become bemired in the accretions of ancient history.

The intellectual and spiritual assets wherewith the American people have entered the twentieth century have certainly never been equalled. Our economic control of nature has made us by far the wealthiest of nations in point of material resources, and these constitute the essential foundations, if we use them rightly, for the leisure, the appreciation and the education through which less tangible values are to be realized. Our one hundred million people constitute a population homogeneous and co-operative to an extent never yet equalled elsewhere.

But the faith of our people in education and their disposition to support it is the greatest of these assets. In 1915 over 1,500,000 of the adolescent youth of this American people were studying in our public and private secondary schools. Over 250,000 young men and women were in our colleges. These hundreds of thousands represented the best of aspiring America. They are, to the extent that their schools and their surroundings are capable of inspiring them, eager to serve their country and time. They have acquired a kind of frankness and vital interest in realities that we think of as American. They are not easily subjugated to the traditional just because it is traditional, but neither are they at heart irreverent towards ancient or great things when the ancient is really significant and things alleged to be great (for present or future) are such in reality. They do not reverence authority as such, for they see in submission to authority a means and not an end of the truly democratic life.

Utterly without foundation is the carelessly made charge that these young Americans are preoccupied with sordid ambitions for money or position. True, each boy or young man, and, equally, be it said to their credit, each girl and young woman, now looks forward to the day when he shall be able to render through some suitable vocation valuable service to the society which has nourished him. As a means

to fullest serviceableness in this vocation, he desires and actively embraces at the right time, genuine vocational education; and in some collective capacity America is now disposed to expand opportunities for vocational education as supplemental to the general or liberal education which our regular schools have heretofore offered. Much as we aspire to a due measure of leisure for all, we do not approve the ideal of a leisure class as such. We are too familiar with the close connections heretofore obtaining between leisure classes and a prevalent sensual aestheticism and moral degeneracy.

These clean-limbed, open-minded youth of ours—are we to believe that they have only inferior capacities for higher idealism, for the development of that new humanism for which the twentieth century calls? It is the proper function of education to help face these adolescents towards the future. This is no static civilization of ours. We are not seeking to remain eternally on the same level. We have learned the inevitableness of change, of evolution, and we have begun to feel, if not yet clearly to perceive, the possibilities of controlled evolution.

What is the problem before the educational institutions of America? It is, let us repeat, to provide on behalf of our youth, the genuine means of a *liberal* education that shall be adapted to our age, our people, our circumstances. What would the best of the Athenians of the age of Pericles do were they in our place today? Would they try to find in forgotten tongues and antiquated fragments of literature the culture, the idealism, the mental disciplines that will transform plastic youths into citizens strong to uphold the state, to advance up the slopes of intellectual inquiry and of appreciation of the possibilities of conscious co-operative direction of social forces towards the higher goals that the purposeful discovery of the future will reveal to us?

Let us first try to interpret what is undoubtedly in America today a very well-developed, even if only partially articulate, spirit of humanism—using that term in a legitimately modernized sense. It is not possible for us to locate the gods behind the summit of Mt. Olympus. To us they are abroad in our own land and among our own people, and the effects of their wills are everywhere manifest in our own day. In many of the most important matters of life our attitude and outlook are almost inconceivably different from those of the Greeks and Romans. Slavery and all other forcible subjugations of the body and spirit of man, not required for the general social well-being, have become things abhorrent. Moral degradation, poverty, and all the other sources and concomitants of low efficiency, of undemocratic competition, and of persisting unhappiness, are steadily being repudiated by the social conscience of our time. More keenly than ever do we perceive the needless horrors entailed by aggressive war, the disease-like character of crime and immorality, and the social wastage resulting from lack of knowledge and skill. A constantly increasing proportion of our people are steadily striving towards the day when within our borders may be found a vast and a thriving population, keenly appreciative of all the sources of light and fine sentiment that help to make life richer and purer. To the attainment of these conditions, we more than ever perceive the need of originality, of science, of the development of the best humanistic ideals and means.

We begin to understand our responsibilities for developing types of citizenship that Greece or Rome could not possibly conceive. It is our conviction that in a democracy, it belongs to all to assure to each the right to be socially efficient in all ways—culturally and morally, no less than physically and vocationally; and to enforce the performance by each of the duties which inevitably attend and complement rights. America sets the world high example in its persistent demands for

increasingly wholesome family life, a better position for women, a fair start in life for all children. We are striving towards the time when in a purposeful way we may use all forms of fine art to the fullest extent that is possible in our day and generation as instruments of control, development, enrichment of life. We certainly see much farther into the things of society than did or could our Greek or Judean or Roman or Teutonic forebears. We have now the means of developing, as they could not, things of the mind and things of the spirit.

The new aims and methods will have to be developed in large part experimentally by educators who are well grounded in psychology and sociology. It is improbable that these experimenters will fail to make full use of the valuable materials to be found in existing customs. Like the Pasteurs, Edisons, and Lincolns who, in other fields have wrought to new achievements, they will gladly take from past practice or surviving custom the light that will help them on their way. All they ask is that their efforts be not blocked by vested interests and protected faiths. There is no credit to a civilized society in allowing prejudice and blind conservatism to visit death on a Socrates, ignomy on a Columbus, and disheartening obstruction on a Pasteur. The experimental schools of tomorrow—and we must and shall have scores of them—ought to be given the freest possible scope to develop and test new and varied objectives and the means of realizing them.

In a few essential respects, it is certainly even now practicable for the student of modern education to predict some probable developments in the new liberal education.

For the adolescent youth the processes of that education will involve reasonable amounts of the sharpest and sternest discipline—discipline of powers of body, of mind, and of moral character. But the youth himself will certainly be an appreciative and informed party as regards the ends of these disciplines. He will not usually need to be driven in fear, or be

invited to proceed in blind faith, because the valid worth of that which he must do will be a matter of generally understood demonstration. Like the Athenian youth whom we delight to recall, he will be trained, and trained hard if necessary, in those powers that have a visibly functional place in society as it is today or will be tomorrow. No longer will he be obliged, in the name of an obsolete pedagogy, to subject himself to disciplines which, like the nostrums of mediaeval medicine, could rarely be taken by intelligent persons except in a spirit of uncertainty and misgiving.

We are indeed learning to be ashamed of that devotion to educational "simples" which in our secondary education deluded us into thinking that a year or two of work with algebra and geometry by adolescents who would later make no vocational use of the knowledge acquired, or four years of indifferent study of a classical language, with its resulting meagre grasp of literary selection, read often with the furtive aid of ponies, can give for our day and generation the foundations of the powers which we idealize as intellectual discipline. We are learning the futilities of that misleading and mechanical pedagogy based upon a metaphysical and unscientific psychology which thinks to find in Latin and algebra intellectual philosopher's stones—to find in these mummified studies, quite divorced from all the realities of mind, spirit and body as they belong to our day and generation, precious means of nurture for mind and spirit.

But the new liberal education will achieve only part of its results through the rigorous processes of hard discipline. It will provide also for many forms of growth through appeals to native interest, ambition, and instinctive good will. It will discover a pedagogy suited to the easy evoking and establishing of appreciations and ideals of approved worth. It is a widespread error of educators of the older type that schools rated good by current standards develop appreciation, tastes and

ideals generally through the exercises of the classroom. This happens occasionally for the rare pupil under an average teacher and for many pupils under the exceptional teacher—that one teacher out of a thousand whose native genius can make even mathematics or Latin fascinating. But these finer qualities are much more often the by-products of the school life, the residual effects of play, social intercourse, and miscellaneous reading. The secondary school of the future will have a splendid opportunity to extend and render more effective these forms of education of which the disciplinarian and taskmaster knows little and often cares less. A new type of schoolmaster must arise who can comprehend the significance in true cultural education of self-inspired work, leisurely development of tastes and abiding interests, and the richness of inspired social intercourse.

Much light is now being shed on the problems of developing a functioning liberal education through the progress recently made in defining the ends and means of effective vocational education. Heretofore, all education except the vocational education designed to prepare for a few professions, has been vaguely assumed to “fit for life”—in the vocational no less than in the cultural and civic sense. Faculties of liberal arts colleges have solemnly defended the thesis “a college education pays” when business men, moved only by considerations of vocational efficiency, have challenged them. That a college education might well “pay” on grounds wholly other than vocational—and pay both the individual in culture and the other abiding satisfactions of life, as well as society in the higher type of citizen produced—should be a highly defensible thesis. But endless confusion results when the objectives of vocational education and of liberal education are confused, or when it is assumed that the same means and methods will serve equally the ends of each. Vocational education in any properly delimited meaning of the words must have its processes, its

means and methods strictly determined by the requirements of a known calling—and in the modern world these tend to proliferate and multiply along lines of specialization to an almost indefinite extent.

Fortunately, we now see that we cannot effectively “vocalize” education by offering in a high school or college a few elective studies or courses of an academic nature, with a slight accompaniment of laboratory illustration or practice. We have been attempting this in numberless cases with agricultural, industrial and commercial education—and even with home economics, journalism, business administration, teaching and social work. Only recently are we coming to perceive the great wastefulness and futility of it all. We are certainly destined soon to have a system of vocational schools, the vestibuled approaches to the thousands of vocations now found in civilized society, but these schools will be as definitely differentiated from schools of general education as are now colleges of law, medicine, dentistry and military leadership. We may expect then that the functions properly belonging to schools not vocational in purpose will be revealed more clearly. With this knowledge, we can proceed to devise the most effective general or liberalizing education for those thousands who must or will close their general school in their fourteenth or fifteenth year; for those other thousands, more fortunately situated, who can give from one to four precious years to the liberal education offered by the secondary school before embarking on the study or practice of a specific vocation; and also for that minority who usually combine much native ability with fortunate home conditions who aspire to a “college degree” before taking up the study of a profession. Here lie our opportunities to differentiate the ends and to determine the means of genuine liberal education.

Among its larger objectives this liberal education must develop and conserve for present and future generations in

those who are to lead, attitudes of intelligent hopefulness, and faiths in human improvement and all that we call progress. Towards other peoples and towards peoples of different qualities in our midst, it must stand for increase in sympathetic understanding and mutual helpfulness. As regards the great social inheritance of knowledge, customs, and institutions which we have acquired from the past, its spirit should be appreciative and discriminating, based on the conviction that some things, and some things only, of that inheritance have a vital, a functional significance for the present and the future.

Among the more specific results of a better liberal education, we trust that the men and women in the future will exhibit a finer and stronger command of our wonderful mother tongue than is now the case. A good command of the vernacular is indeed among the vague ideals of our schools of liberal education now, but the means to their realization of this are seriously ineffective. We have every right to expect the discovery of educational means whereby education towards desirable mastery of English can steadily be improved. There exist beliefs—shall I say superstitious beliefs (certainly they rest on no adequate evidence)—that study of one or more alien tongues is a highly desirable, if not necessary, condition of sound attainments in the vernacular. But with English steadily evolving towards becoming a world language, we can have confidence that a fine command of it is possible under right methods of training, even to those who have secured no power over another language.

It will readily be understood that well-developed insights into, and appreciations of, English literature must also count as an indispensable element in the liberal education of all our young men and women. But this is not to be interpreted as including only study of those portions of English literature which are held to be classics. Too often the older vernacular literature, like the ancient literatures in other languages, possesses no

functional value in inspiring youth to seek to interpret and to share in the control of the social and cultural forces of the twentieth century. We must include appreciations, understandings and evaluations of all that literature which is each year in process of being made—and which, in a collective way, often voices the aspirations and the forming social attitudes of the peoples and times in which we live. Of course, at present we know little of the best means and methods for the direction to such study; but they are certainly discoverable.

Next in importance to the English language and English literature as means of liberal education, we should place the social sciences, as these can be adapted to lay secure foundations of insight and ideals for good citizenship and fine human aspiration. But here again we must discard the traditions that have heretofore bound us to the ancient and the remote. History, that great encyclopedic massing of data for the social sciences, must be made a subject of reference, not something to be studied for its own sake in chronological order by those youths who are laying the foundations for genuine humanistic culture. Students must first acquire concrete experience and definite knowledge through vital contact with the significant realities of the living present; then, as occasion offers, and needs of interpretation and perspective arise, they will be turned towards those things in history that demonstrably do function in better appreciation or understanding of the things of today, tomorrow, and next century. The range and variety of problems to be solved by the citizen of a progressive democracy in the twentieth century are great indeed; and that can be no true culture, no true humanistic learning, which does not with sureness of aim and precision of method inspire and train the adolescent for their solution.

Few will dispute the claim that in a modern scheme of liberal education a large place should also be given to natural science. The science subjects now found in our secondary

schools and, to a large extent, in our liberal arts colleges, have rarely contributed in any genuine way to culture. They have suffered somewhat from the opposition of the former defenders of the classics but still more from their misguided friends who would, on the one hand, make them Cinderellas in the interest of vocational competency or else sharp drillmasters of "scientific method" and the mental discipline supposed to be derived from an intellectual "cure-all." Wholly new objectives and wholly new methods are needed in natural science teaching. Some successful experiments pointing ways to these are to be found even now. No one awake to the larger possibilities of liberal education need doubt that the natural sciences—those sources of insight and aspiration that have largely made the twentieth century, for good or for ill, what it is—can yet be made vital means of liberal education.

There remain the fine arts of music, painting, and sculpture. Our schemes of so-called liberal education give little or no place to these today. But should not purposive development of taste and insight here be given prominence in any generous project for liberal education? Certainly discriminating and catholic appreciation of these fine arts constitute a large element in culture as best understood and defined. No less, certainly, when once the valid objectives of a functioning liberal education shall have been determined, we shall find appreciative studies of the fine arts given high rank among the means to that end.

What do we desire with reference to the classics in our schools and colleges? Only this: that they shall be accorded no special favors, given no artificially protected position. We wish the field of higher education to be made as open as possible to the end that in its every effort to devise, invent, and create the means of a liberal education adapted to the needs of our time and opportunities, we shall not be hampered by the dead hands of useless tradition, the old inertias and controls of an

age that saw in a static civilization the highest of all earthly glories.

Do we wish to prevent the study of the Latin, and especially of the Greek, language and literatures? Assuredly not! For those with genuine interests in such studies, every facility should be afforded in schools and colleges that can obtain enough students to justify the expense. And we hope that, given fewer students and the genuinely interested, such studies might become, for a few at any rate, genuine well-springs of interest, appreciation, and insight—something which is far from being the case at present.

We earnestly desire that the great languages and literatures of Greece and of Rome, and of every other age that has enriched the world, shall be the objects from time to time of careful inquiry and developed appreciation by persons mature enough to serve as interpreters of these treasures to each succeeding generation. We believe that from age to age in the light of our own added knowledge and developed experience, these languages and literatures will still continue to make their contributions, as will, in somewhat similar measure, ancient Irish lore, the sagas of the European northwest, the philosophy of India, the religious writings of Confucius, and even the mythology of our own North American Indians. To none of these sources of inspiration can a country like ours in its future evolution be completely indifferent. From time to time, we shall expect aspiring spirits to visit these faraway lands and to bring back some treasures fit for the adornment of our temples. For these purposes, however, we shall require no compulsory study of these ancient languages in our secondary schools or our colleges. Much more profitable will it be for us that individuals themselves take the initiative from time to time in making the necessary explorations.

In fact, a large part of the liberal education offered, even in the secondary school, will consist in the deep plumbing of a few

intellectual or aesthetic fields in which the candidate has native interest and power. Under a yet to be developed system of educational guidance, each learner will be induced, as part of this liberal education, to select some one field of culture and to make of that a life interest. Among these might well be: Greek language and literature; 17th century English literature; modern Japanese language, history, and literature; violin music; architecture; "natural history" of a given region; some branch of social science; eugenics.

The foreign languages, ancient and modern, and mathematics—what place will finally be reserved for these subjects which, despite frequent allegation to the contrary, now compose the heavier part of practically all programs of secondary education designed as preparation for college, solely because of their supposed value as apparatus for mental gymnastics? It is perhaps too early to say with confidence. Algebra and geometry will unquestionably hold a strong position in the prevocational training of those who have reasonable expectations of entering vocations using mathematics as an important instrument. A few other persons may be expected to elect them through sheer native interest in the special intellectual activity and the particular insight which such study affords. We shall hope and expect, too, that in addition to those who study for probable vocational use, a modern language, others may be induced to give the toil and enthusiasm required to beget that mastery of French, or Japanese, or Russian, or Spanish, which shall enable the fortunate possessors thereof, like generous amateur musicians, to be sources of appreciation and insight in circles where they move, as well as translators—in the larger sense of the term—of the good will and intellectual riches of the peoples whose culture has become accessible to them through the mastered language. In somewhat similar process may we also expect, as elsewhere suggested, fine spirits to prepare themselves, from time to time, to journey intellec-

tually in quest of treasure still to be found behind the linguistic walls of Greek, Latin, Sanscrit, Erse, and Inca writings.

To make these things possible in education, much will yet be needed of courage, faith, inventiveness, and labor. But these are even now extensively enlisted in support of many progressive movements and experimental developments. One immediate step that will help much is an educational declaration of independence which will release the grip of one of the few surviving relics of old-world tradition—a declaration of independence from the grip of the Dead Hand of Latin.